

INTRODUCTION

The position is located in a field location of the Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service. The incumbent performs inspection and grading work on processed fruits, vegetables, and related products at processing plants, Field Offices, and/or inspection points and similar facilities as assigned. Assignments are technically limited and/or involve a limited number of varieties of processed fruits and vegetables.

II. DUTIES

Selects representative samples from product lines or completed lots according to approved sample plans.

Determines the U.S. grade and issues certification documents for products inspected. Inspectors evaluate and determine a variety of quality differences in product quality.

Performs condition of container inspection to determine kind and extent of defects. Performs condition of product inspection at destination.

Observes processing plants for sanitation to determine compliance with Department rules and FDA regulations. If the plant is not in compliance, the grader reports this to plant management and higher Branch officials.

Observes characteristics of the raw product. Advises plant management of findings and the feasibility of proposed changes to improve quality stability of the processed product and sanitation.

Performs a limited number of analytical determinations by prescribed methods and techniques under the direction of an inspector of higher grade.

III. EVALUATION FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position (750 points)

Thorough knowledge of and skill in applying the official standards, regulations, and specifications to grade a limited number of processed fruits and vegetables and related products which differ considerably from product-to-product .

A limited ability to apply a variety of processed products methods and procedures and related storage and shipping practices and to inspect plant facilities with regard to sanitation requirements.

Skill in expressing oneself logically and concisely in both oral and written form when rendering decisions.

Skill in establishing rapport and conducting oneself in a tactful and diplomatic manner with industry personnel to maintain good working relations.

2. Supervisory Controls (125 points)

The supervisor makes the assignments and, with the help of a higher grade inspector, coordinates the work.

The employee, in most instances, independently performs the procedures required by the assignment, resolves most technical problems, and makes binding grade determinations. The employee issues certificates and reports explaining and justifying determinations. When a new commodity is assigned, the grader consults with higher graded employees if guidance is needed.

Certificates and technical proficiency are frequently reviewed.

3. Guidelines (125 points)

The guides consist of the official U.S. grade standards for processed fruits, vegetables, and related products; regulations pertaining to plant requirements for sanitation and processing; manuals for grading and conducting inspections; and supplemental written and oral instructions for borderline and unusual situations.

The employee uses discretion in selecting and applying the appropriate guides to a variety of situations and independently explains or advises industry management on USDA requirements or policies as they apply in unusual situations. Analyzes processing methods and, with the advice of the supervisor or inspector of higher grade, advises plant management of their effect on product quality when guidelines are not apparent.

4. Complexity (75 points)

The work consists of grading and inspecting a limited variety of processed products through application of standards, regulations, and specifications. These products may have a small number of product formulations within a product group.

The employee must consider a number of objective and subjective factors when inspecting and grading products and evaluating sanitation conditions. The grader may encounter some problems

(i.e. borderline cases) also. The latter are resolved in consultation with the appropriate instructions and the supervisor.

5. Scope and Effect (150 points)

The work involves determining the grade and acceptability of processed fruits and vegetables and related products, inspecting processing facilities for sanitation, and maintaining effective relationships with industry management.

The grading and inspection decisions made by the grader directly affect the financial interests of the buyers or the sellers.

6. Personal Contacts (25 points)

Contacts may include the employees of processing and related industry firms, as well as other Agricultural Commodity Graders and employees of other governmental agencies.

7. Purpose of Contacts (120 points)

Contacts are to develop and maintain the cooperation of plant management and industry employees and resolve conflicts, to explain grade determinations and related agency policies and regulations, and to advise on or exchange information related to technical matters.

8. Physical Demands (50 points)

Commodity grading work requires periods of physical exertion to lift and move boxes and cartons of product often weighing at least 50 pounds; prolonged periods of standing, walking, stooping, bending, and climbing; physical coordination and finger dexterity in at least one hand to perform digital examinations of commodities; ability to detect abnormalities in the commodity through normal or corrected vision in at least one eye for distance, depth perception, and color; the ability to assure safety in a highly mechanized and/or noisy environment through adequate or correctable hearing; and the ability to determine product quality through smell and/or taste.

9. Work Environment (20 points)

The work environment includes exposure to freezing temperatures, slippery surfaces, moving materials, handling equipment, high noise level, and similar risks typical of processed fruit and vegetable and related processing plants and storage areas.

TOTAL POINTS - 1440